traveler information services which are provided by the Metropolitan Council (of Minnesota) as a temporary substitute for highway traffic service following the collapse of the Interstate I–35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 1, 2007, until highway traffic service is restored on such bridge.

''(2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of activities reimbursed under this subsection shall be 100 percent.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 3311, and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset, let me express my great appreciation to my colleagues in the Minnesota delegation for their cohesion and their support of legislative action to respond promptly to the needs of the people of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota. Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. KLINE, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. ELLISON, in whose district this tragedy occurred, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. WALZ, Mr. PETERSON have all united as one in support of the needs of the people and in common mourning for the tragedy that occurred.

All of us were struck deeply within our souls over this tragedy. Ms. MCCOLLUM's daughter, just miraculously almost, passed over this bridge shortly before it collapsed.

I want to express my great appreciation to the gentleman from Florida, the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. MICA, and his staff and to Mr. PETRI, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Mr. DEFAZIO of Oregon, Chair of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, for the cooperation, for the splendid efforts made, and for the common cause in which we all persevered to bring this legislation promptly to the House, as we are doing today.

And, again, I'm very grateful to the gentleman from Florida for his participation.

Bridges are built to last, not forever, but for a very long time. The title, in Latin, of the leader of the Catholic church is Pontifex Maximus, the maximum bridge builder. And when that title was adopted, bridges were built to last. The one in Rome has lasted 2,000 years, a marble arch bridge.

But in our day and time, not much that we build lasts forever, and that is why we have a bridge inspection program. That is why we annually evaluate the condition, structure and structural integrity of bridges and their operational capacity and ability; and why, in the current law, SAFETEA-LU, with the help of then Chairman YOUNG, I included language to authorize the funding of a new technology comparable to the technology used in aviation to determine the structural integrity of aircraft wings, movable surfaces and fuselage, to find hairline cracks using technology that can discover microscopic cracks not visible to the naked eye and then measure their propagation and do the same with bridges.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation was offered the opportunity to use that technology, and I am disappointed that the State rejected the opportunity to use that technology to test the structural integrity of the bridge that collapsed.

In March of 2004, I sent Members of the House a letter and information providing data developed, at my request, by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics showing the number and location of structurally deficient bridges in the national highway system in each Member's congressional district.

Now, not many Members followed up on that, but I just happen to have in front of me the letter addressed to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) who did respond. The letter pointed out the number of structurally deficient bridges in each Member's district and then pointed out that, in 2002, the U.S. Department of Transportation found that 167,566 of the Nation's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Since then, that number has grown to, of the 597,340 bridges in the national bridge inventory, 26 percent are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Then the cost to repair and bring to a good state of maintenance, the cost in 2004, was estimated at $9.4 billion a year to maintain. In the SAFETEA-LU legislation, we provided $4 billion a year. It should have been at $5 billion. If the original introduced bill Mr. YOUNG and I introduced in October of 2003 had prevailed, we'd have been at $5 billion a year. We are where we are.

But this is the map, in smaller form, that we sent out to all Members of the House in 2004. For the State of Minnesota, it lists all the structurally deficient bridges. There are 19 on this list updated today.

The State of Minnesota has 13,000 bridges. 1,135 are structurally deficient. 451 are functionally obsolescent. That's 12.2 percent. That's one of the lowest percentages in the country, but it underscores the serious problem of the State of Minnesota and of the Nation's bridges.

We come to the floor today united in purpose to help the State rebuild this structure. The estimate from the Minnesota Department of Transportation is in the range of $200 plus million, which may grow, depending on the bridge abutments on both sides of the river; and the structural integrity of those facilities has yet to be fully evaluated. So the $250 million is a soundly based estimate, based on engineering evaluations, and is a fair number, and so is the funding that we provide in the legislation to compensate the State for the shift from highway transportation to transit as occurred in California, in Oakland earlier this year in April when their bridge collapsed due to a tanker truck collapse.

Those are the basic figures. Those are the justifications. We've limited, capped the dollar amount for transit at $5 million in response to a question from the other body, and we have a well-supported figure of $250 million for the reconstruction out of general revenue funds.

I appeal for the support of this body for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3311 and join the gentleman from Minnesota whose State and area has been hit by this terrible, horrible tragedy that's taken lives.

And on our side of the aisle, when we do have a national tragedy of this nature, we do try to pull together in a bipartisan manner to address the needs of people who have suffered this type of, again, horrible disaster.

I know that the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has taken a leadership role today in approving this money; and I'm pleased, as the Republican leader, to also come forward and lend our support for this authorization.

Now, many people have asked me what we're doing here today. And we are authorizing $250 million for repair and reconstruction of the I–35 bridge over the Mississippi River. Now that's authorization and Federal authorization. It is not funding, and there must be appropriations.

I might say that we're doing that because the authorization fund, the Highway Emergency Relief Fund, unfortunately, we had $100 million and it's depleted. Not only is that $100 million depleted but also the reserve and additional money that was put in in the supplemental is depleted. So that's why we're doing this for our friends and colleagues and those who have suffered this loss in Minnesota.

It's my hope that this bridge will be built in rapid order and replaced; and I know that the good custodians in Minnesota, with their Transportation Department, will work to see that happen.

But let me say that the Minnesota bridge is only, unfortunately, the tip of the iceberg in an aging infrastructure and transportation system that we have in this country. We have, out of almost 600,000 bridges, about 80,000 bridges that are structurally deficient. Twenty-seven percent of our bridges are structurally deficient or obsolete, according to one of the most recent studies; and the infrastructure, not